

# Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for Whom?

A Struggle over Discourses and Interests in the Global  
Compact for Migration

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# Abstract

Although non-binding, the newly adopted Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), fills a void in global governance. Previously, migration has lacked global institutional norms and efforts to create such norms have been opposed by western states. Yet, the GCM is adopted at a time when nationalism is potent. This thesis offers a Critical Discourse Analysis of statements conveyed by states and institutions involved in the GCM. By outlining dominant discourses and interests, it seeks to understand and re-politicize the Migration Compact. A combined theoretical framework based on institutional theory and productive power allows for analysing ways in which discourse influence political issue-linkages and relations of power. The thesis finds that the conflicts associated with international migration remain, but that actors have adopted a depoliticising 'management' discourse which facilitates cooperation. However, interests align over international cooperation through discursively linking development to decreased irregular migration. Thus, states in the 'south' are able to request development cooperation in exchange for controlling migration for states in the 'north', who fear the political dilemma caused by unwanted arrivals. In addition, the findings suggest that power is produced for the International Organization for Migration, which is now the main institution in the UN that 'manages' non-refugee migration.

*Key words:* Migration, Global Governance, Power, Discourse, Compact  
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# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
ICM	International Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Migration
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	International Relations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
SDGs	The Sustainable Development Goals

# 1 Introduction

In December 2018, 164 world leaders came together to adopt the first global policy document on international migration. Since then, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) has been labelled an “unlikely achievement” (Neewland 2019). Although it is *non-binding*, the GCM constitutes a significant addition to the field of migration governance. Previously, any global compact on migration was considered politically impossible due to tensions between states’ interests. Not only is international migration charged under the current political climate. It is also fundamentally at tension with the sovereign state system. Thus, although we have yet to see the role played by the GCM, its adoption begs the question of what made it possible and what it tells us about contemporary migration politics. This thesis attempts to begin a limited inquiry into these broad questions by looking at the discourses and interests of some of the states and United Nations (UN) institutions that were involved in the GCM.

## 1.1 Research Problem, Research Aims and Research Questions

The last decade has, on the one hand, seen a rise in nationalist politics, urging governments to strike down on immigration. On the other, there has been an increase in multilateral cooperation on migration, culminating in the induction of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) into the UN and the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) (Neewland 2019). How does one make sense of these apparently conflicting trends? Out of the two compacts, the GCM is the most striking, as refugee migration was already institutionalized at a global level.

Previous research has shown that migration governance is characterised by an interplay of interests, ideas and power (Betts 2011a, pp. 8, 14-15; Paoletti 2011, pp. 210-213). While material interests influence the behaviour of states and other actors, cost and benefit are ultimately socially constructed and affected by discourse (Betts 2011a, p.22.; Paoletti 2011, pp.206-208). It follows that to understand the GCM, one must study the discourses in which it is embedded and their relation to the interests of and the power relations between the involved actors.

This study attempts to do that, by critically examining the dominant discourses that adopting states and UN institutions produced with regards to the GCM. It tries to answer the following research question:

*What dominant discourse(s) and interests did states and the UN convey during the formation of the GCM?*

This is complemented by three clarifying sub-questions:

- *What was the dominant discourse(s) across actors?*
- *Is there a pattern to the preferred discourse(s) adhered to by sending states, receiving states and international institutions?*
- *How are these discourses related to the interests and power relations of the actors involved in the GCM?*

The aim of the study is twofold. At first, it seeks to outline the dominant discourses and interests produced by states and institutions that were involved in the GCM. Based on these, it offers a discourse-based understanding of how the GCM came to be. The understanding is critical in the sense of seeking to uncover the interests and power relations that are embedded in the GCM. The political conflicts of migration are nothing new. However, scholars have noted how such conflicts have led to the usage of federative discourses and universal-value claims to smooth over political differences (Pecoúd 2015, pp. 2-6, 96, 125-127; Pouliot & Therien 2018). Thus, the second aim is to provide a re-politicised account of the GCM. As argued by Pecoúd (2015, p.127), no rethinking of migration politics is possible without bringing back the political nature of ideas and the power relations that underpin them.

### 1.1.1 Why Discourse?

The GCM can be regarded as the negotiated outcome of different ideas of what migration means and how it should be managed. As such, it constitutes the scene for a struggle between the different understandings of migration that are to be codified in the first global migration pact. For the involved actors, it is a milestone event for promoting a language and a narrative that suits their interests. As the Compact is non-binding and leaves room for interpretation, the meaning-making process continues over the content of what “making migration work for all” entails on the ground (GCM 2018, p.2). Hence, viewing the GCM through a discursive lens, allows for analysing the ways in which actors utilize language and narratives to promote certain discourses and ultimately, political interest.

Discourse is here understood as the social meaning of language and communication in use. As such, the term directs attention to the idea that communication is not

neutral, but constructive of human meaning making (Wheterell 2001, pp. 14-17). This makes discourse a social *practice*, since it is produced through action (Wheterell 2001, pp 14-15). Concretely, it means that the ways in which actors use language to present migration in the GCM, is partly constructive to the social boundaries of migration governance. *Language* is understood as both written, oral and visual communication.

## 1.2 Thesis Outline

This chapter has presented the main research problem, specific research questions and aims. The next chapter will continue to set the scene by elaborating on international migration, the GCM and core definitions. Chapter 3 summarizes previous research, which forms the basis of the theoretical framework in chapter 4. Liberal Institutional Theory and Productive Power make up the basis of this framework. In chapter 5, the case study design and the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology is presented along with a description of data collection and analysis. Chapter 6 brings all these elements together by presenting the findings and the empirical analysis of the study. The findings suggest that although political conflicts remain, federating discourses and issue-linkages has facilitated cooperation in the GCM. Lastly, chapter 7 concludes by summarizing the analytical findings and pointing out directions for future research.



## 2 Setting the Scene

This chapter sketches out the context of global migration governance and the GCM. It elaborates on the contested nature of international migration, the GCM and provides definitions for key concepts.

### 2.1 Politics in the Age of Migration

Migration is as old as humanity. Yet, it is not until the organization of the world into sovereign states that *international* migration becomes a relevant phenomenon. Thus, international migration is inherently political and at odds with the sedentary bias of the state system (Zolberg 2006b, pp.64-67; Malkki 1995). Central to this political nature is the tension between the idea of universal human rights and the principle of state sovereignty (Crepeau & Atak 2016). As recognized by Hannah Arendt, ‘the right to have rights’ does not in practice extend beyond citizenship (Hunt 2018). In addition, migration is inseparably connected to inequality. For critical scholars, the migration regime serves to uphold world inequality (Zolberg 2006a, pp.123-124). Bauman (1996) has gone as far as to call the ability to migrate the main stratifying factor of contemporary society. For others, migration is seen as a development engine, allocating labour and sending important remittances to the ‘south’ (De Haas 2012). Over the past decades, as more people have gained access to the global mobility infrastructure, the political nature of migration has become more prevalent (Koslowski 2011, p.1). Even though most migration is regular and controlled, migration has become a symbol for the fear of uncontrolled globalization. Increasingly, migration is being linked to questions of development, security, culture, and nationalism (Lahav & Messina 2006, pp.1-5). Measured in numbers, scope and political saliency it appears indeed as if we are living in “the age of migration” (Castles et al. 2014).

### 2.2 The Global Compact for Migration

Migration is sometimes referred to as ‘the missing regime’ in international politics (Kalm 2008, p. 38). While there is a lack of formal cooperation, migration governance is characterized by a loose institutional patchwork (Betts 2011a, p.8; Koslowski 2007, pp. 1-3). Thus, the GCM fills a normative void, as it for the first time brings migration into the UN system. Such an undertaking has previously been

opposed by western states. That is not to say that the topic is less sensitive than before. During the GCM process, 12 states pulled out, including the US and Australia (Newland 2019). According to Newland (2019), the initial spark for the GCM was the migration ‘crisis’ in 2015 which convinced more states that migration requires international policies. At its best however, the GCM is “the softest of soft law” (Neewland 2019, p.4). It contains what law *ought to be* rather than what law *is*. It may however, become a significant soft-law tool (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2018, pp. 7-8).

### 2.2.1 What is a Compact?

The term *compact*- ‘the coming together of pacts’, indicates an emphasis on political cooperation rather than legal commitments. Compact, as in the ‘coming together of actors’ also suggests a technical focus. This inclusiveness is less about representation and more about technical expertise (Roele 2018, p. 15). Before member states were invited to discuss the draft, the GCM was mandated by expert panels and the IOM (Neewland 2019, p.3). Moreover, Compacts carry a specific history within the UN system. Previous ‘Global Compacts’ have been adopted on corporate social responsibility and public-private partnerships (Barnett & Duvall 2005) Like the GCM, these are presented as technical norms resulting from institutional expertise, rather than political ideas (Roele 2018, p. 11).

### 2.2.2 Refugees or Migrants?

The separation of the GCM and the GCR reflects the institutional binary between *refugees* and (‘economic’) *migrants*. However, reality does not conform to intuitional labels. Much migration is ‘mixed’ and blurs the line between persecution as recognized under international law and other reasons for crossing a border (Newland 2019; Zetter 1991). Like Scalettaris (2007), this thesis argues that while research must relate to these labels, it should not be bound to them. Hence, while the data in this thesis refers to *migrants* as in opposition to *refugees*, it should be kept in mind that what makes a person a refugee or migrant is ultimately the fact of being labelled as such (Zetter 1991).

## 3 Previous Research

The recent nature of the GCM means that little extensive research has yet been published on the topic. However, the thesis builds on certain theoretical and empirical works on migration and governance. It is worth summarizing the main takeaways from this research below.

### 3.1 Ideas, Interests and Power

Conventional IR theory offers a useful way for explaining the difficulty of global migration governance. A common denominator for these perspectives is an emphasis on interests. They assume actors to be rational self-maximisers and poses a world in which states compete for influence. It is argued that states which primarily *receive* migrants have little incentives for endorsing multilateral cooperation. *Sending* states, however, have nothing to lose and much to gain from such cooperation (Betts 2011b, pp. 313-317). For example, Koslowski (2007, pp. 6-10), has suggested that receiving states gain economically from few global migration norms, as this means that their labor markets can be kept flexible.

These views have been complemented by authors who emphasize the role of *ideas*<sup>1</sup>. For Pouliot & Therien (2018), the difficulty of collective cooperation is characterized by normative value struggles. Consequently, they argue that actors adopt universal-value claims to legitimize their positions. As we shall see below, such depoliticising discourses play a role in facilitating migration governance (Pecoúd 2015).

It is however, by combining *interests* and *ideas* that one can make the most useful contribution. Paoletti (2011), extends the conventional IR position by showing how a security *discourse* has influenced the interests of Italy and Libya in the context of their mutual migration agreement. She argues that the bargaining power of Libya vis-à-vis Italy is increased not by the migrant arrivals per se but by the discourse in which these are framed. The stronger the fears associated with migration in the ‘North’, the more successful are the migration-related tactics of the ‘South’ (Paoletti 2011, p. 13). In this way, power is produced by material factors and

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<sup>1</sup> (Bradley 2017; Castles 2011; Clemens & Postel 2018; Delgado-Wise 2018; Geiger & Pecoúd 2010; Kalm 2008; Pecoúd 2018; Pecoúd 2015; Pouliot & Therien 2018; Roldan & Des Gasper 2011; Schierup et al. 2018; Wee et al. 2018)

discourse in an interrelated manner. Thus, she challenges the assumption that sending states have no power in migration politics (Paoletti 2011, p. 13).

## 3.2 Trends in Migration Governance

### 3.2.1 Controlling Irregular Migration

The ‘gap-hypothesis’ suggests that there is a discrepancy between receiving states ability to control migration and public demands for less immigration (Boswell 2003; Cornelius & Rosenblum 2005; Freeman 2011; Martin et al.2014). According to this line of research, states are unwilling or unable, to stem irregular migration (Bhagwati 2006). In fact, it has been argued that some irregular immigration is economically desirable (Boswell & Straubhaar 2004; Hanson 2009). Hence, politicians struggle to balance business interests, working class interests, nationalist sentiments and demands for human rights. The consequence has been described as ‘policymaking gridlock’ with a resulting gap between rhetoric and outcomes (Martin et al. 2014, pp. 3-6). At the heart of this political struggle is the idea that irregular migrants simultaneously constitute wanted labour and unwanted people (Zolberg 2006a, pp.111-112). Critical scholars have argued that it is the very efforts that aims to stop irregular migration, that sustains it, in effect pertaining a situation in which cheap labour can be exploited without the labourers demanding politically sensitive actions such as rights and legal status (Andersson 2014, pp. 273-281; Brachet 2018).

At the same time, political pressure to control irregular migration has increased, making receiving states more inclined to turn to international efforts. This ‘globalization of migration control’, refers to a trend of externalized border policies and bilateral agreements between receiving states, sending/transit states and international organisations (IOs) (Gammeltoft- Hansen 2011, pp.1-3; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Vedsted- Hansen 2017, pp.2-7; Düvell 2005). Notable examples include the EUs deal with Niger to criminalize transit migration and its partnership with the Libyan coastguard for intercepting migrants at sea (Brachet 2018; European Union 2017b).

### 3.2.2 Migration Management and Development

Pecoúd (2015) and others, has researched the ways in which migration is discursively framed within global governance (Geiger & Pecoúd 2010; Kalm 2010; Schierup et al. 2018). ‘Migration management’ has become an established buzzphrase, offering a technical and depoliticised version of migration with the

promise of win-win outcomes (Pecoúd 2015, pp. 21-25). For Geiger & Pecoúd (2010, pp. 17-18), this discourse constitutes a way for states to overcome political sensitivities by collaborating with non-democratically accountable IOs and framing inhumane control measures in a technical language. IOM is thought to play an important role in developing this narrative (Pecoúd 2018). In contrast to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), IOM lacks a clear normative framework. Rather, it has been critiqued for being malleable and operating as a technical service provider despite its political tasks (Bradley 2017; Pecoúd 2018). It is this critique that invites us to ask the title-question, safe, orderly and regular migration for whom?

The management narrative is also linked to what is referred to as ‘the migration and development nexus’. While the actual relationship between migration and development is disputed, literature has highlighted the ways in which the two are discursively linked (Castles 2011; Delgado-Wise 2018; Roldan & Des-Gasper 2011; Wee et al. 2018). In this discourse, migration is a mean for economic development. The central argument being, if only migration is well-managed, its development potential will be unleashed for the benefit of all. Paradoxically, development is at the same time framed as a mean for deterring migration from ‘south’ to ‘north’ (Clemens & Postel 2018; Boswell 2003). Thus, according to Wee et al. (2018), migration has been pushed onto the global agenda through the linking of migration to development. Since 2007, the main global platform for discussing migration has been the informal Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) (Betts 2011a, pp.2-3; Wee et al. 2018). From this perspective, the GFMD is seen as part of an international infrastructure that naturalizes the link between migration and development. In the following chapter, conceptual takeaways from this research are used to form a theoretical framework.

# 4 Theoretical Framework

It is now clear that any in-depth account of the GCM ought to consider both interests and discourse and the ways that these relate. Drawing from the research presented above, the thesis uses a combined theoretical framework. It consists of two main building blocks: Liberal Institutional theory and Productive Power.



## 4.1 Liberal Institutional Theory

The main features of Betts (2011b) theory have already been mentioned. It can be regarded as the skeleton of the theoretical framework and sets the foundation for anticipating some of the political conflicts in the GCM.

The theory tells us that migration governance is characterized by a conflict of interest between nations which can be regarded as primarily sending, transit and/or receiving states. On the ground, this plays out along ‘south’/‘north’ and regional lines (Betts 2011b, pp. 313-317). Receiving states are regarded as the implicit ‘*makers*’ of migration policy and are hence unwilling to sacrifice sovereignty in favour of cooperation. Policy ‘*takers*’ in the form of sending states are expected to favour cooperation (Betts 2011b, pp. 316-317). For example, this is reflected in the signatories of the Treaty on the Rights of Migrant Workers which almost exclusively consist of ‘receiving states’ in the ‘south’ (Betts 2011b, pp. 315-317). The thesis uses the terms ‘south’ and ‘north’ since these arguably carry less ideological baggage than ‘developing/developed’ and ‘third world/first world’ (Paoletti 2011, p.27). Subsequently, Betts (2011b, pp. 315-317) uses game theory to deduce the scenarios in which global cooperation can be achieved. A *collaboration* problem (contributions to collective action) can be overcome if migration becomes linked to other issue-areas in which receiving states see interests or if what happens in sending states becomes tied to receiving state interests (Betts 2011b, pp. 315-317). Such *issue-linkages* are a key concept for the theoretical framework.

Betts’s (2011b, pp. 313-317) theory is not without limitations. Institutions and states regularly produce discourse which affect the playing field. As he recognizes, cost, benefit and issue-linkages are ultimately socially constructed (Betts 2011a, p.22). This requires filling out the skeleton with theory on discourse. The concept of Productive Power provides a useful entry points for doing this.

## 4.2 Productive Power

Productive power refers to ways in which changing understandings of meanings and norms (discourse), influence relations of power (Barnett & Duvall 2005). It is based on the premise that discourse is functional (Wetherell 2001, p. 17). By fixing one understanding in favour of others, discursive practises can play into political interests. Thus, just as physical control over state borders, control over discourse can be a source of political power (Wetherell 2001, p. 25). In this way, the thesis uses *productive power* to theoretically connect interests with discourse. Pecoúd's (2014) concept of International Migration Narratives (IMNs) is useful here for understanding the discursive features of the GCM through which power is produced. While the thesis uses the term *discourse* instead of *narrative*, the meaning is the same in this case. An IMN is defined as a federative discourse that orders and depoliticises international migration (Pecoúd 2014, pp. 2-6, 96, 125-127). As such, it is a discourse that facilitates cooperation in a field otherwise characterized by conflict (Pecoúd 2014, pp. 13-15,62). While IMNs constitute a welcome contrast to xenophobia and nationalism, they are fundamentally depoliticising in posing a universal narrative that hides underlying power relations (Pecoúd 2014, p. 126) As argued later, such discourses can also *produce* power.

In addition, Critical Discourse Analysis provide us with theoretical concepts to use in relation to productive power. The term *interdiscursivity* describes the ways in which different discourses are related and can be combined to form new discourse. Discourse always draw from earlier events but can be *rewoven* into new forms. Through this struggle over meaning, *hegemony* occurs when there is consensus about a discursive understanding. (Jorgensen & Phillips 2011, pp. 11-13).

## 4.3 A Combined Approach

The theoretical segments are used together by looking at the ways in which discourse, in the form of depoliticising language (IMNs), and argumentation are used to produce issue-linkages that affect power and the relations between actors. For example, *discursively* linking migration to development can provide incentives for sending and receiving state to accept multilateral cooperation. This is no easy task as institutional theory and productive power reflect different ontological standpoints. Yet, the thesis argues that the case study design and critical realist perspective allows for trying a less theoretically dogmatic approach. There is no reason to disregard material interests and institutional theory as it is still useful. At the same time, one should not be blind to research which has showed that governance is also influenced by discourse (Barnett & Duvall 2005; Paoletti 2011; Pecoúd 2014).

## 5 Research Design and Methodology

The thesis is constructed as a single case study of the GCM with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology. The features of and the motivations for this design and method are described below.

### 5.1 A Case Study Design

As the meaning of a case study is sometimes interpreted differently, there is a need to define it here. For Bryman (2012, p. 68), a case study is a study in which the case is “the focus of interest in its own right”. This entails an ‘idiographic’ approach in which the researcher seeks to understand the unique features of the case (Bryman 2012, p. 69). In addition, De Vaus (2001, p.119) has noted that a case study is concerned with wholes rather than parts. While all these traits are reflected in the thesis, its focus on discourse make it more targeted than the typical case study posed by De Vaus (2001, pp. 231-232). This focus, however, is motivated by the role of discourse in migration governance as studied by previous research (Kalm 2008; Pecoúd 2014; Paoletti 2011).

In addition, the thesis includes a comparative element in the sense of comparing the discourses of sending states, receiving states and UN institutions. However, the interest lies not in the actors per se but in the narratives produced by and across these actors. Hence, the unit of analysis is neither states nor institutions but discourse.

The case design and the selection of the GCM is based on three grounds. Firstly, the GCM constitutes a unique case as it is the first document of its kind. This makes it suitable for study on an intrinsic level (Bryman 2012, p.70). It is also a revelatory case, as the Compact has not yet been extensively researched. Thirdly, it is possible that the GCM can to some extent highlight wider trends within contemporary migration governance. However, the single case design means that external validity is not the aim. Hence, primary focus is dedicated to the first two motivations.

The study is simultaneously descriptive and explanatory. As stated above, the principal aim is to find out the dominant discourses and their relations to the involved actors. However, this will inevitably entail venturing into explanatory territory. As suggested by Paoletti (2011, pp. 210-213), the analysis of discourse and power is an important aspect of explaining migration governance. Although it will be limited, it is thus expected that the findings will tell us something about how



the GCM came to be. Notably however, the study is not intended to claim causality between the identified discourses and the outcomes of the GCM. Rather, its contribution lies in dissecting the arguments and narratives of the involved actors. This makes the purpose rather *exploratory* than explanatory in the traditional sense.

The thesis adopts a critical realist position. Critical realism poses a world that is independent of description but at the same time dependent on description for us to make sense of it. Hence, it is not the natural but the social world that is constructed (Fairclough 2010, p. 4). This position is not primarily motivated on philosophical grounds but is deemed appropriate based on previous research which has highlighted the interrelated nature of material interests and ideas (Betts 2011a; Paoletti 2011; Pouliot & Therien 2018). Epistemologically, it follows that while the researcher may strive towards an accurate depiction of reality, it is bound to be influenced by preconceptions. By remaining transparent and self-reflective, the thesis seeks to present a fair account for the reader to assess.

## 5.2 Methodology

Based on the aims and previous research, a discourse analysis inspired by Fairclough's (2010) account of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is selected for carrying out the study.

CDA looks at the function of language and social practices in relation to power. In this case, that means analysing the ways in which migration is discursively presented by different actors in the GCM. CDA is explicitly critically realist. In practical terms, this means that discourse is not analysed independently but in relation to 'non-discursive' elements. According to Fairclough, discourse is in a dialectal relationship with material objects and hence both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices (Fairclough 2010, pp. 3-4; Jorgensen & Phillips 2011, p.5). In other words, the focus is discourse but not in isolation. This approach suits the ambition of the study to examine the interplay between discourse, interests and power. Arguably, while all migration governance is discourse it is not *only* discourse. As shown by Paoletti (2011, pp. 206-208), migration discourse and material interests influence each other in a way that is similar to the dialectical relationship posed by Fairclough (2010, pp. 3-4). A CDA analyst thus explores the relationship between discourse and 'reality', in this case by studying the way discourse influence the actors and interests in the GCM or vice versa (Bryman 2012, p. 536).

Moreover, CDA approaches are normative. The normative element in this thesis lies in deploying what Fairclough calls explanatory criticism (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, p.79). Such critique seeks to explain why social phenomena are

sustained or changed based on unequal relations. Here, it is used for re-politicising the discourse(s) of the GCM. Traditionally, Fairclough's (2010) version of CDA entails an in-depth linguistic analysis. This, however, is where the CDA inspired method used in this thesis diverges from the original. While the thesis studies 'language in use', it is less interested in linguistic details and more concerned about the overall social significance and discursive purpose of the analyzed texts.

### 5.2.1 Data

To find out about the discourses and interests conveyed in the GCM, three types of data sources are used: 1. The GCM itself, 2. Media produced by the IOM and, 3. Statements from states and UN institutions during the negotiation and adoption of the Compact.

As a negotiated document, the GCM provides clues to the interests and discourses that went into forming it. In the preamble, it showcases the overall language and sentiment of the Compact. As for the IOM, its role in facilitating the Compact and its growing mandate in migration governance makes the organization an important source of data (Newland 2019). It is, however, necessary to look beyond the GCM and into the process that went into forming it. Hence, the bulk of the data consists of the selected statements from involved states and the UN. These allow for analysing discourse and stated interests along the line of specific actors. Where appropriate, the thesis also includes the author's own observations from the 2018 Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) which took place in connection to the conference for adopting the GCM.

### 5.2.2 Data Collection

The data is selected to provide an overview of the discourses produced by the main actors in the GCM. It is not intended to be representative but is sampled purposively along the following criteria (Bryman 2012, p. 48).

Firstly, data is sampled from actors which are deemed influential. This entails looking at powerful states, UN institutions and common statements from the EU and regional negotiation blocs. Secondly, an effort is made to ensure statements from both sending, transit and receiving states in different regions. The data is however limited to English, meaning that Latin America, West Africa and many Arabic-speaking countries are left out. In addition, not all statements are available publicly. Third, states which are expected to have high stakes in migration issues have been prioritized. This includes states with high emigration or migration rates and states affected by irregular migration on both the sending and receiving end.

### 5.2.3 Data Analysis

The analysis focuses on the discourses, and interests conveyed by the actors in the GCM and the relations of these to political issue-linkages. It uses the Miles & Huberman framework which identifies three interwoven stages of qualitative analysis: Data reduction, Data display and Drawing and verifying conclusions (Punch 2005, pp. 197-199).

In concrete terms, this means that the study is qualitatively coding for ways of presenting one's interests and discursive ways of framing and linking migration to other issue-areas. For example, some actors emphasize sovereignty and returns of irregular migrants whereas others emphasize cooperation and links migration to economic development. Attention is paid to ways in which language is utilized for or is reflective of a certain interest. Hence, the analysis looks for key words and phrases. For data display, NVivo is used to generate visual representations of the processed data. These are used in conjunction with reviewing the data, for reaching conclusions. Along all stages, the theoretical framework is used to make sense of and draw conclusions from the data.

In carrying out the analysis, a set of guiding questions is used for each piece of data (Bryman 2012, p. 529). The questions are used to critically identify and investigate discourses. In chapter 6, a summary of the analysis and findings is presented. The question includes:

1. What discourse(s) and interests are visible in the text?
2. What is this discourse doing?
  - Is it serving a particular interest?
  - Is it related to any issue-linkage in migration governance?
3. How is this discourse constructed to make this happen?
  - What are key-terms and how are they given meaning?
  - What is omitted?

## 5.3 Limitations

### 5.3.1 Discourse and Non-Discourse

It has been pointed out that a weakness of CDA is its inability to empirically account exactly for what constitutes discourse and what constitutes non-discourse. (Jorgensen & Phillips 2011, pp. 23-24). This is true also for this thesis. While some would state that all is discourse, it is the position of the author that the distinction between discourse and material factors is useful for this study. It allows for analysing how narratives and language influence the produced and material

relations and capabilities of actors. In other words, the dialectal relationship described by Fairclough (2010, pp. 3-4). With that being said, the thesis does not claim to have ‘solved’ this critique in any other way than that the distinction between discourse and non-discourse should be regarded as analytical rather than empirical.

### 5.3.2 Width, Not Depth

The thesis offers only an overview of the discourses produced by the various actors. This is not unproblematic since Paoletti (2011, p.10) has acknowledged a difference between *stated* and *real* interests. Often, official discourse does not match actual migration policy. The wider scope means that the thesis is primarily able to account for the interests that are clearly visible in the data or otherwise deducible from theory. Thus, while the CDA allows for ‘reading between the lines’ it is possible that ‘hidden’ interests are left unaccounted for. Where feasible, the thesis has compared rhetoric with actual policy. Yet, to fully account for all interests, and understand the discourse of a certain actor, a more in-depth and targeted study is needed. This, however, will have to be focus of future research. At this early stage of research into the GCM, the wider focus is deemed appropriate, even though it is limited.

### 5.3.3 Data limitations

As stated above, the data is limited. It provides a partial selection of statements restricted by language and availability. This means that the findings cannot be said to reflect the whole of the interests and discourses in the GCM. Many NGOs and CSOs were involved in the GCM process. However, due to time constraints, statements from these had to be disregarded in favour of states and more influential UN actors. Thus, the thesis does not account for the more rights-based versions of safe, orderly and regular migration promoted by NGOs. Hopefully, future research can pay attention to the important role that civil society play in promoting migrants’ human rights. Nevertheless, it is the position of the author that the purposefully sampled data provides a relevant, if partial first insight into the GCM.

## 6 Results and Analysis

The analysis is divided into three parts. Firstly, 6.1 outlines the dominant and most widely adopted discourse in the GCM, labelled ‘migration management’. It is argued that what makes this discourse dominant is its ability to reweave competing discourses in a language that sees them as working together. However, the expected political conflicts of interests remain and dependent on these, actors utilize different versions of the general discourse. These dominant interests and the ways in which actors use discourse to promote them is discussed in 6.2. Despite tensions, common ground is reached through the migration and development nexus. This is the focus of 6.3. It elaborates on how the discursive linking of development to less south-north migration, functions to align the interests of sending states, receiving states and UN institutions. Lastly, 6.4 elaborates on ways in which the presented discourses influence relations of power.

### 6.1 Managing Migration for the Benefit of All

The data shows a patchwork of discursive understandings over the meaning of ‘Safe, Orderly and Regular migration’. *State sovereignty*, *universal human rights* and *the migration and development nexus* remain the primary discourses which actors combine to promote their own vision for the GCM. Out of these, state sovereignty is the most institutionalized discourse- it is built into our framework for world organization. Human rights discourse and the migration and development nexus are less fixed. They are however, codified in the UDHR and the SDGs respectively- two documents which actors frequently refer to. What brings these discourses together is the depoliticising language of *migration management*. This federating discourse or *IMN* is already well studied (Geiger & Pecoúd 2010; Pecoúd 2015). Yet, there is a need to analyse the manifestations of this discourse within the GCM. As we shall see, the GCM process includes not one but several competing versions of migration management. First however, we shall look closer at the signifying features of this discourse as it appears in the GCM.

### 6.1.1 The Triple-Win Narrative

*“Let’s work together for a safer, less fearful and more prosperous future both for our own societies and for the world’s migrants. That means for us all”.*

- Sec. general A. Guterres (2018), opening speech at ICM

*“Safe, orderly and regular migration is in everyone’s interests. It can bring great prosperity for countries of origin and destination as well as for migrants themselves”*

- A. Burt (2018), United Kingdom statement at ICM

The above quotes are two of many which highlights the overall GCM mantra. Namely, that migration is unavoidable, global and requires international management for handling its risks and maximizing its benefits for all (Arbour 2018; GCM 2018; Guterres 2018; Netherlands representative 2018). This narrative can be found across all actors but is initially formulated by the UN (Guterres 2018; Arbour 2018) Indeed, all analyzed statements make some reference to the benefits of international migration management. The term *manage* is useful because it is malleable. It suggests that migration is a technical problem rather than political. In practice, management can mean anything from border control policies to development and protection policies. This depoliticising discourse is clearly expressed in the GCM (2018) itself. In the preamble, state sovereignty and human rights are equally recognized, making clear that the compact inflicts no *new* obligations on states (GCM 2018, pp. 1-5). However, recognising existing human rights in practice would entail a stark deviation from current border policies and sovereign privileges. Such conflicts are largely omitted by the GCM (2018) which paints a common, yet fragmented vision of ‘making migration work for all’.

In this discourse, sovereignty, human rights and increased multilateral cooperation are brought together by linking ‘safe, orderly and regular migration’ to a triple development-win for sending states, receiving states and migrants (Arbour 2018; EU 2017a; Greece representative 2018; Netherlands representative 2018; Nigeria representative 2017; Burt 2018). Receiving states can fill labour gaps and manage implicit security concerns, sending states gain from remittances and knowledge exchange, and migrants gain a better life and rights protection (Arbour 2017; Haque 2018). For these benefits to be harnessed, it is argued that (international) management is required (Guterres 2018; South Africa 2018). This makes the management discourse fundamentally depoliticising and *interdiscursive*. It is successful because it reweaves the conflicting discourses of sovereignty and universal human rights in a language that sees them as working towards the same universal goal: better migration management through cooperation (Arbour 2017; Haque 2018; Eritrea representative 2018; European Union 2017a; GCM 2018; Guterres 2018; South Africa representative 2018). In the GCM, it functions to facilitate common ground. As we shall see, it also allows actors to express their diverging interests in a universalistic manner.

### 6.1.2 The GCM as a “Restaurant Menu”

During the 2018 GFMD, one state delegate compared the GCM to a restaurant menu. His point was to emphasize sovereignty, meaning that states can pick and choose the objectives that suits their political ambitions. Sensitive objectives such as legal pathways could be disregarded (Personal observation, GFMD, Dec 7, 2018). This narrative is not only used by states. The IOM website refers to the GCM as a “menu of actions that states can choose from”. (IOM 2019a) In an IOM video, a diverse group of people, filmed in multiple world locations provides the viewer with information about the Compact (IOM 2019b). The comments fill in each other, making it seem as the whole world is talking as one. The message is that the GCM has something for everyone. “*Everybody benefits- nobody gets exploited*”, and, “*what’s in it for migrants, for governments and for organizations like ours?*” (IOM 2018b). Keywords for describing the Compact are also established here. The GCM is not an *agreement*. Such wording would connote a binding commitment. Instead, IOM and most other actors use the less rigid expressions *roadmap* or *blueprint*.

Reality, however, is that migration has always been underpinned by unequal relations (Zolberg 2006a, pp.123-124). Everyone cannot be equally heard and pleased in politics. This is especially true for the most vulnerable migrants, whose vulnerability is enhanced by and sometimes contingent on the very border policies that seek to *manage* migration (Spijkerboer 2013). One may argue therefore, that the triple-win argument on which the management discourse rests, is a false narrative. Just like trade, migration can contribute to development and prosperity. Migration *policy*, however, is to paraphrase Cox (1981), “always for someone and for some purpose”. It is only if one accepts the management premise of migration as technical, non-political issue that the triple-win narrative is possible.

Arguably, the management discourse is successful exactly because it is flexible. Yet, this means that the meaning of managing migration so that it is ‘safe, orderly and regular’ is still a relatively open discursive battlefield, even after the finalization of the GCM. Because of this, although the management discourse is the most dominant, it is less clear whether it can be regarded as *hegemonic* in the sense of discursive consensus (Jorgensen & Phillips 2011, p. 13). On the one hand, this discourse is prevailing, on the other, its success is contingent on the fact that its meaning is fleeting. To the extent that it can be argued that hegemony is always unstable, and that consensus is never complete, it is possible to call migration management a hegemonic discourse within the context of the GCM (Jorgensen & Phillips 2011, p. 13). However, to avoid any confusion, the thesis will continue to use the less theoretically saturated term, ‘dominant’.

## 6.2 Discourses and Competing Interests

Above, we saw that the dominant GCM discourse accommodates both the discourse of state sovereignty, that of universal human rights and the goal of increased international cooperation. Inside it however, the political conflicts of international migration remain. While all analysed statements reference the need for international cooperation, the content and emphasis vary. The sending/receiving dichotomy fails to capture many nuances. However, the statements suggest that it still reflects the main conflicts of interests over the GCM. In this section, the thesis looks at these interests and the ways in which actors utilize discourse to promote them. For a generalized overview of the interests and discourses, see Appendix 2.

### 6.2.1 Managing Irregular Migration

Most receiving states firmly assert that the compact is non-binding and that states have an inviolable right to choose who to admit to its territory (Denmark; 2017; EU 2017a; Greece 2018; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018; Merkel 2018; Netherlands 2018). Sustaining sovereign privileges, stemming irregular migration and facilitating returns of unwanted migrants are commonly expressed interests by major receiving states (Burt 2018; European Union 2018; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018 UAE representative 2018). In their statements, recognitions of human rights are often accompanied with a reassertion of sovereignty. The Danish prime minister states: *“Every human being has human rights. But migration is not a human right. And migration can never be unchecked or uncontrolled”* (Løkke-Rasmussen 2018). This fear over the Compact leading to ‘a right to migrate’ is not just expressed by Denmark but was commonly stated during the GFMD. The German co-chair of the GFMD, made his opinion clear when stating in the plenary that migrant’s human rights are not simply given but must be *earned* (Personal observation, GFMD, 7 Dec 2018).

The same can be seen when receiving states address migration and development. It is frequently made clear that irregular migration can never be conducive to development but is an inherently damaging force (Burt 2018; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018; Merkel 2018). The UK representative states: *“irregular migration erodes public confidence, damages economies, and places people on the move in situations of great vulnerability”*. We can observe here how the triple-win narrative is used in relation to receiving state interests. *Managing* irregular migration is framed as a universal good, for all states and for migrants themselves. It is presented not just as an issue for sovereignty but as necessary for sustaining multilateralism. *“If we fail to stop irregular migration together..we risk that people will turn their back on international cooperation”*(Løkke-Rasmussen 2018). Frequently, the interests of states are rhetorically linked to the plights and suffering of migrants. Fighting trafficking, slavery and irregular migration are grouped together, allowing states



and the EU to speak of protecting migrants and tightening borders in the same sentence (Burt 2018; European Union 2017b; Italy representative 2017; Merkel 2018). The Turkish representative (2018) makes this clear when stating explicitly that Turkey does *not prevent* migration but *manages* it when referring to its ‘success’ in catching irregular migrants. Notably, the need for legal pathways is omitted by all receiving states except Canada (Hussen 2018). In contrast, increasingly international border controls are framed as inherent to the triple-win solution, circumventing the critical argument that these policies are the cause of the suffering and chaos that they claim to prevent (European Union 2017b; Italy 2017). As argued by a UNICEF representative during the GFMD, there is nothing *inherently* dangerous about migrating. Rather, vulnerabilities are created by the border policies that criminalise movement (personal observation, GFMD, 7 Dec 2018). However, this realization is omitted by the discursive understanding of migration described above. Migrant deaths are presented as a consequence of smuggling- something which requires tougher management (Løkke-Rasmussen 2018; Merkel 2018). Thus, by using a version of migration management closely intertextual to sovereignty, the real-world choice between repressive border controls and the well-being of migrants is discursively removed. It allows for presenting ‘safe, orderly and regular migration for all’ in terms of technical border control, without considering the inequalities inherent to the modern migration regime (Zolberg 2006a, pp.123-124).

## 6.2.2 Managing Migration for Development

In contrast, several sending and transit states in the ‘south’ underscore the need to translate the GCM into institutionalized cooperative measures (Afghanistan 2018; Haque 2018; Eritrea representative 2018; Kenya representative 2018; Pakistan representative 2018; Locsin 2018). Bangladesh, a country with a large emigrant population, asserts that the GCM could have been bolder and contravenes the notion that global migration governance would sacrifice sovereignty (Haque 2018). It also tackles one of the ‘elephants in the room’- that few may actually implement the GCM, by stating that unless we *do* something, all we ever got was a “holiday in Marrakech”. Similarly, Philippines argue that sovereignty entails a “duty to protect” (Locsin 2018). Among states, sending states are the most vocal promoters of migrant’s rights even though many of these have questionable human rights records themselves. Dominant interests include development cooperation, development finance and facilitating remittances (African Group 2018; Eritrea 2018; India 2018; Locsin 2018; Uganda 2018). Some also argue for voluntary returns and reintegration assistance from states that send back migrants (Afghanistan 2018; African group 2018). The discursive framing of these interests often aligns with the narrative promoted by the UN over the positive aspects of migration. Many sending states assert the notion of migration as a development opportunity for all (African Group 2018; Haque 2018; Hashmi 2018; India representative 2018; Locsin 2018).

Notwithstanding the actual development outcomes of migration, the discourse that links the two concepts appear as a useful tool for sending states to promote a version of safe, orderly and regular migration that aligns with their national interests.

Likewise, the UN Secretary General and Special Representative for Migration relies on the migration for development discourse to promote their shared vision for the GCM. Special representative Arbour (2017) states:

*“Migration can make an important contribution to addressing some of the worlds challenges, including climate change, sustainable development, gender equality and, population decline and ageing. It also has an overwhelmingly positive social, economic and cultural impact on countries of origin and destination and presents an empowering experience for millions of migrants and their families”.*

In this quote alone, Arbour (2017) presents a plethora of development issue-linkages. Politically, these function to link migration to broader development efforts- something which many states have already committed to. At the same time, Arbour (2018) and Guterres (2018), presents a more people-centred version of migration management than most states. It appears that their rhetorical purpose is twofold. One the one hand, promoting multilateralism through issue-linkages and universal value claims. On the other, reminding states that human rights must be respected.

### 6.2.3 Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for Whom?

We have seen now that Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for many receiving states entails a focus on stopping irregular migration and reassuring sovereign rights. For several major sending and transit states in the ‘south’, safe, orderly and regular migration is associated with development efforts and more institutionalised international cooperation. For the UN, Safe, Orderly and Regular migration means multilateralism and finding common interests, although Human Rights is presented at the forefront. It should be emphasized that these observations represent general trends. Arguably, political constituency play as much a role for determining rhetoric on migration as actual migration rates does. Canada is an outlier among the Western receiving states, expressing a commitment to human rights and legal pathways (Hussen 2018). Moreover, major sending states such as South Sudan (2018) and India (2018) are also themselves concerned with irregular immigration. Many countries must be regarded as simultaneously sending, receiving and transit states. Nevertheless, from a general perspective, the analysis suggests that sending/receiving and south/north tensions are potent.



” Honouring international commitments to unlock the potential of all migrants for development”. UN Special Representative for Migration, Louise Arbour speaking about the migration and development nexus, a few days before the adoption of the GCM.

### 6.3 Development for Less Migration

So far, it has been suggested that states have adopted a depoliticizing discourse labelled ‘migration management’, which facilitates cooperation by posing migration as a technical problem. Secondly, it was suggested that the anticipated conflicts between actors remain, and that dependent on these, actors try to *reweave* the overall discourse. In this section, we look closer at one way in which discursive issue-linkages function to align the interests of sending and receiving states.

In chapter 3, it was suggested that the framing of migration as a security threat and the failure to stop irregular migration at a national level has made receiving states more inclined to endorse cooperation. At the same time, these measures have increased the leverage of sending states, as receiving state’s interests are now tied to what happens in the former (Paoletti 2011, p. 13; Betts 2011b, pp. 313-317). Indeed, the statements suggest that this development play a role in persuading receiving states to accept the move towards multilateralism. Several statements, irrespective of falling towards the sending or receiving category, express a commitment towards tackling the ‘*root causes*’ of (irregular) migration (Hailemichael 2017; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018; Uganda 2018). During negotiations, the African group argued that the international cooperation coming out of the GCM should focus on addressing ‘root causes’ of irregular migration through long term development programmes. This would include investments in education, private sector etc (African Group 2018). The EU responded by stating that international cooperation is “*vital for making migration safe, orderly and regular*”, but that it must include cooperation on “*returns, fighting smuggling and border*

*management*” (European Union 2018). Similarly, several European states express their willingness to fight irregular migration through development cooperation. Merkel (2018) states:

*“if the goals in the areas of education, health, security and nutrition are not achieved, neither will we manage to get to grips with illegal migration and truly put a stop to it. That means that the development and implementation of this Compact and its content are inextricably linked”.*

In the same vein, The UK, Netherlands and Denmark emphasize their efforts to steer and increase their development aid in the direction of tackling irregular migration (Burt 2018; Netherlands representative 2018; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018). Neither however, provides a concrete answer to exactly which ‘root causes’ they are referring to.

One sees here that a different version of the migration and development discourse is at work. In this discursive issue-linkage, development is presented as a tool for stemming migration. This is a contrast to the other side of the discursive development nexus in which migration is presented as a desirable force. Still, many actors utilize both discourses interchangeably. The narrative rests on the premise that if development is achieved in the ‘south’, more people will choose to stay in their country of origin. Hence, they will no longer evoke the political dilemma feared by politicians in the north. However, evidence that development aid stems migration is weak (Clemens & Postel 2018). During consultations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa argued that African emigration is in fact a consequence of development (ECA 2017). One may suggest then, that like the triple-win argument, the ‘development for less migration’ argument is primarily a narrative. However, notwithstanding its bearing on reality, it discursively aligns the interests of sending states (development cooperation) with the interests of receiving states (stopping irregular immigration) over multilateral migration cooperation. In addition, it allows for sending states to discursively package their efforts to stop migration in a language that frames them as benevolent to the greater good. Thus, the argument that development may lead to more migration is ignored, in favour of this more attractive discourse

Pliez (quoted in Paoletti, 2011, p. 197) has argued that stemming irregular migration requires development finance because no state is “willing to control the doors of Europe for free”. One can argue then, that the development finance is not relevant because development and migration is, as Merkel (2018) suggests “inextricably linked”, but because it functions as a bargaining chip for receiving states seeking to externalize their border control. As such, it is less about development and more about buying foreign investments in border management. However, the difference between development aid and border control is muddled, since control measures are presented as part of state and capacity building (African group 2018; European Union 2017b). The IOM plays a role here, as it is one of the organizations which is given the mission to improve migration management in countries of origin. For

example, its activities include informing and warning prospective migrants about the dangers of migrating- an effort which blur the line between helping migrants and representing receiving state interests (Pecoúd 2018).

This discursively facilitated ‘development for migration control-exchange’ fits into the overall migration management discourse. Discursively, it constitutes a ‘triple-win’ in as much as development is achieved and irregular migration is stemmed, which according to the narrative produced by receiving states is also a ‘win’ for migrants (European Union 2017b). This is even though it constitutes more fences and repressive border laws in countries of origin and transit (Brachet 2018). It should be noted that his development cannot itself explain why the GCM was possible. Rather than global compacts, the development for less migration issue-linkage would be expected to favour regional or bilateral cooperation. Nevertheless, the statements suggest that states had these relations in mind when discussing the GCM.

## 6.4 The GCM & Power

So far, the analysis has outlined migration management as the dominant, yet fleeting discourse of the GCM. It has suggested that receiving states, sending states and UN institutions use different weaves of discourses to influence the overall narrative. It has also suggested that interests align over the discursive issue-linkage of development to less migration. In this last part of the analysis, the thesis looks closer at how these discourses influence relations of power.

### 6.4.1 Institutional Power

As discussed in the beginning of the analysis, the primary function of the migration management discourse is to facilitate cooperation by depoliticising migration. As such, it also serves the interest of the UN in widening its institutional mandate. According to Barnett & Duvall (2005, p. 60), discourse and institutions in global governance, “contingently produce particular kinds of actors with associated social powers, self-understandings, and performative practices”. Most obviously, the IOM is a winner in the GCM process. The organization which is now part of the UN has been mandated to lead the ‘UN network on migration’ for overseeing the implementation of the Compact (Newland 2019). As such, the IOM can now be regarded as the primary international entity which *manages* non-refugee migration. Hence, one may suggest that the management discourse functions not only to facilitate cooperation but ultimately legitimizes the mission and growth of the IOM. As stated at the end of the IOM video referred to earlier, “*The GCM means that our role as a trusted government partner and supporter of migrant rights will only grow*”

*in importance*” (IOM 2018b). Rhetorically, IOM recognizes no tension between carrying out state policies and supporting migrant’s human rights. Rather, one can suggest that its social identity as an ‘objective’ international organization allows it to discursively circumvent this dilemma. We can argue then that the IOM’s newfound power is partly produced through the discursive issue-linkage provided by the depoliticising triple-win narrative. By reinforcing the social category of the IOM as the technical entity which manages migration for the greater good, power and legitimacy is produced.

#### 6.4.2 State Power

The analysis confirms Paoletti’s (2011, p.13) argument that the discursive framing of irregular migration as a threat, increases the leverage of sending states. Throughout the statements, one can observe how receiving states seek influence over sending and transit state policies. In doing so, they are willing to meet sending state demands such as development cooperation and facilitating remittances (European Union 2017b; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018). The line, however, is drawn at legal pathways which is only articulated by certain sending states, the UN (excluding IOM), and Canada. In this exchange, the ‘development for less migration’ discourse function to legitimize sending’s state’s demands for aid in the eyes of receiving states. At the same time, it also means that receiving states can discursively package their efforts to stop migration together with development, under the depoliticizing label of ‘management’. It appears then, that Paoletti’s (2011, p.13) observations are more relevant post the 2015 migration ‘crisis’, now that migration is increasingly framed as a social and security threat. As posed by Betts (2011b, pp.316-317), sending states are expected to favour international cooperation on migration. This is confirmed by the statements. One can suggest then, that the increased leverage of sending states in the area of migration politics may have facilitated the GCM. There is, however, no conclusive evidence for this. Yet, we can observe that unlike before, more receiving states see international migration cooperation in terms of opportunities for achieving their own goals, rather than merely a threat to sovereignty (European Union 2017b). For example, the United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark appear willing to endorse soft multilateralism with the ultimate goal of strengthening sovereignty and stemming south to north (irregular) migration (Burt 2018; Løkke-Rasmussen 2018; Merkel 2018).

#### 6.4.3 Is the Subaltern heard?

It should now be painfully clear that the interests of migrants themselves are left out of the picture. To some extent, this is related to the fact that the analysis does not include statements from NGOs. Yet, it is true that the GCM is ultimately

negotiated by states, with state interests in mind. During the government days of the GFMD, a journalist raised the concern that migrant's interests are unaccounted for, by rephrasing Spivak's (2014) saying, "can the subaltern speak" to "are the subaltern *heard*". He argued that even though civil society and migrants now attend the Forum, their arguments are seldom listened to (Personal observation, GFMD, 7 Dec 2018). *Subaltern* in this context highlights the postcolonial aspect of south to north migration and the institutionalization of power relations that unequal access to mobility entails (Bauman 1996). Although the GCM puts an emphasis on human rights, migrants remain powerless in the making of migration policy. By design, even the most democratic states do not consider the interests of non-citizens. Thus, it is not farfetched to assume that the meanings of Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for migrants are different to either one of the discursive variations discussed above.

## 7 Conclusions

The thesis presents a mixed account of the political interests and discourses in the GCM. To sum up, let us return to the research questions presented in the first chapter.

Firstly, as for dominant discourses in the GCM, the analysis suggests that the UN and IOM has succeeded in promoting the federating discourse of ‘migration management’. Rhetorically, all actors adhere to this discourse, albeit in different ways. The discourse builds on the discourses of migration and development, state sovereignty and human rights but weaves these into a narrative that views them as working together and towards the same goal, which is “making migration work for all” (GCM 2018). It appears that the discourse is successful because it depoliticises migration and hence, is able to accommodate diverging interests in the same language.

Secondly, as for divisions of interests and discourse, these partly diverge along the lines of sending and receiving states and ‘north’ ‘and south’. Dependent on their preferred interests, actors attempt to reweave the overall discourse. Whereas, most receiving states frame migration management in terms of controlling irregular migration, sending states tend to reinforce cooperative aspects. Dominantly conveyed interests are found to be, on the one hand, migration control and sustaining sovereignty and on the other, development finance and increased commitments to international cooperation. Yet, interests align over a discursively facilitated political exchange, between development cooperation and migration control. In this exchange, the actual interests of migrants themselves are less heard.

Thirdly, as for power relations, the analysis suggests that the institutional power and legitimacy of the UN and in particular, the IOM is reinforced through the migration management discourse. In addition, power is produced for sending states vis-à-vis receiving states by the discursive linking of irregular migration to security and of development to less irregular migration.

We can see then that many of the political conflicts associated with international migration are as potent as ever. This is no surprise since, as argued by Zolberg (2006b, pp.64-67), the migration regime serves to uphold global inequality. Arguably, migration policies and corresponding movements are both a cause and consequence of power relations between states (Paoletti 2011, p.4). However, the thesis shows that despite tensions, depoliticising discourses has facilitated non-binding global cooperation. Through discursive issue-linkages such as the migration-development nexus, different interests align over international



cooperation. In part, this can help us to understand what made the GCM politically possible.

## 7.1 A Way Forward

To say that future research has a role to play here would be an understatement. The thesis has highlighted some of the discursive aspects of the politics in the GCM. Yet, to fully understand the GCM and more importantly, its implications for wider migration governance and politics, more research is required. In particular, future research would need to situate the GCM in the context of other international processes. How does the GCM relate to other trends in global governance and how does it relate to other documents such as Human Rights-treaties and the Refugee convention? Attention also ought to be paid to how the GCM and GCR relate to each other and how they can be bridged in the context of mixed migration. In addition, scholarly attention is much needed on the question over how migrants and refugees themselves can be more included as migration politics increasingly move into the global and institutional level. Arguably, such a move constitutes an opportunity for increased migrant accountability. Lastly, and more specifically, any quantitative or mixed method study on the actors involved in the GCM would be a relevant compliment to this thesis.

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# Appendix 1: Data

## 1. Statements

### 1.1 UN

- Arbour, Louise. Special Representative for Migration (2018) Closing Remarks, ICM.
- Arbour, Louise. Special Representative for Migration (2017). Statement on Latin America, Consultations.
- Guterres, António. Secretary General (2018). Opening Speech, ICM.
- IOM (2017) Statement on Cooperation, Consultations.

### 1.2 States and Inter-State Actors

#### Africa

- African group (2018) Intervention on International Cooperation, Negotiations
- Ethiopia (2017) Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Consultations.
- Eritrea (2018) Statement at ICM.
- Kenya (2018) Statement at ICM.
- Kenya (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migrants, Consultations.
- Nigeria (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migrants, Consultations.
- Uganda (2018) Statement at ICM.
- South Africa (2018) Statement at ICM.
- South Sudan (2018) Statement at ICM.

#### Europe

- Denmark (2018) Statement at ICM
- Denmark (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migrants, Consultations.
- EU (2018) In-depth discussion on International Cooperation, Negotiations.
- EU (2017) Statement on International Cooperation and Governance, Consultations.
- EU (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migration, Consultations.
- Germany (2018) Statement at ICM
- Greece (2018) Statement at ICM
- Italy (2017) Statement on Cooperation, Consultations
- Netherlands (2018) Statement at ICM
- Serbia (2018) Statement at ICM
- Sweden (2018) Statement at ICM
- UK (2018) Statement at ICM
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#### Asia

- Bangladesh (2017) Statement on cooperation, Consultations.
- Bangladesh (2018) Statement at ICM
- India (2018) Statement at ICM
- Philippines (2018) Statement at ICM
- Philippines (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migrants, Consultations.

#### MENA

- Afghanistan (2018) Statement at ICM
- Egypt (2017) Statement on Contribution of Migrants, Consultations.
- Pakistan (2018) Statement at ICM
- Turkey (2018) Statement at ICM
- UAE (2017) Statement on Cooperation, Consultations.
- UAE (2018) Statement at ICM

**North America**

- Canada (2018) Statement at ICM

All statements available at:

<https://www.un.org/en/conf/migration/statements.shtml>

<https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

## 2. IOM Public Information

- Info on the GCM (2018) <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>
- Video on the GCM (2019) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZtOtSR\\_3f8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZtOtSR_3f8)

## 3. The GCM

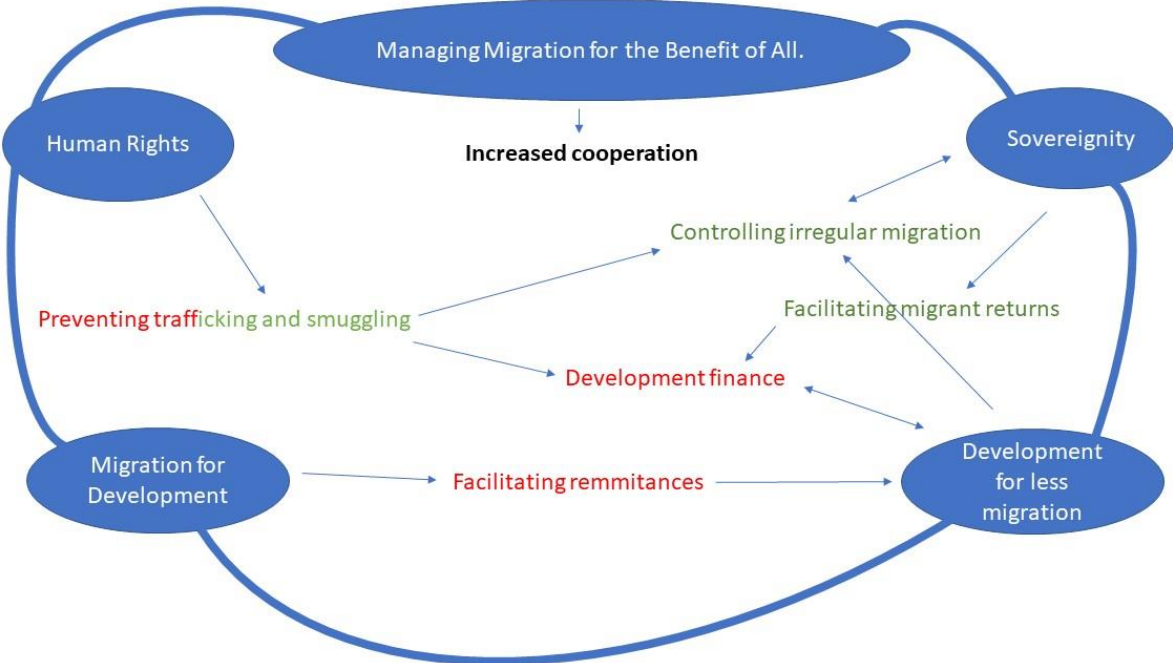
- Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Final Draft, preamble.  
<https://www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/07/migration.pdf>

## Appendix 2: Table of Interests and Discourses

### Interests and Discourses

Actor	Most Emphasized Interests	Most Emphasized Discourses & Discursive Issue-linkages
IOM	Bringing Migration into the UN system	<b>Migration Management for the Benefit of All</b> , Migration for Development, State Sovereignty, Universal Human Rights.
UN Sec. General & UN Special Rep. for Migration	Facilitating Multilateralism, Promoting human rights	<b>Migration management for the benefit of all through multilateral cooperation</b> , Universal Human Rights, Migration for Development, Multilateralism as inherently good.
Receiving States (e.g. Western Europe, South Africa & UAE)	Stemming Irregular Migration, Facilitating Migrant Returns	<b>Migration Management for Stopping Irregular Migration</b> , State sovereignty, Development for Less Migration, Irregular Migration as Dangerous for everyone, Migration & Security.
Major Sending States, Sending/transit states. (e.g. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Pakistan)  (In “global south”)	Development Cooperation and Finance, Facilitating Remittances and skill-transfers, Promoting Migrant Rights.	<b>Migration Management for Development</b> , Universal Human Rights, Development for Less Migration, Migration for Development.
Sending/transit/receiving states (eg. Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, India)  (In ”global South”)	Development Cooperation and Finance, Facilitating Remittances and skill-transfers, Stemming Irregular Migration, Promoting Migrant Rights.	<b>Migration Management for Development</b> , Migration for Development, Development for Less Migration, Universal Human Rights.

# Appendix 3: Discourse Mind Map



The map shows the primary discourses (in blue). The green texts are interests associated with receiving states and the red texts are interests associated with sending states. Arrows indicate how these relate. For example, human rights discourse is used with regards to preventing trafficking but preventing trafficking is also linked to control of irregular migration which is associated with the discourse of state sovereignty. Both discourses and both interests are accommodated under the overall discourse of Migration Management.